sportspersons has been steadily improving. At the Commonwealth Games 2002 held in Manchester, India secured the fourth position and won 69 medals, as against 25 medals won by Indian participants in the earlier Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. In the Commonwealth Games held at Melbourne in 2006, India retained its fourth position. Indian sportspersons have performed creditably in a number of international competitions including the First Afro-Asian Games in Hyderabad in 2003 and South Asian Federation Games in Islamabad in 2004. In the Athens Olympics, 2004, India won the first ever Silver medal in an individual event. In the Paralympic Games, 2004 at Athens, India won one gold medal in athletics and one bronze medal in power-lifting. In the Asian Games at Doha, India lifted 10-Gold, 17-Silver and 26-Bronze. In non-Olympic Sports, special mention might be made of India's outstanding performance in the recent Test Series against England.

(c) No, Sir. The preparation and training of sportspersons for major international events, is an on-going process, which takes into account inputs provided by National Sports Federations. A systematic approach is adopted to the selection and training of athletes and teams for participation in major international events by drawing up and implementing four-year roll-on Plans within the frame work of Long Term Development Programmes (LTDP) under which exceptionally talented sportspersons, selected on the basis of their performance, are put through scientifically designed continuous training programmes. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) plays an important role in this entire process by providing all-round support to high performing athletes, which includes the conduct of National Coaching Camps, providing the services of foreign coaches, and equipment support.

Slow pace of economic development in NER

470. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount allocated for development of North Eastern Region including Sikkim as on 30th June, 2007;

(b) whether it is a fact that the pace of economic development in NER is slow in comparison to other states of the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Apart from the funds allocated through the Annual Plans of the States and other Central Ministries, the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region had released Rs. 5778.96 crore during the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-03 to 2006-07) and in the current financial year (2007-08), Rs. 91.66 crore have been released till 30th June, 2007.

(b) Yes Sir, comparatively the pace of economic development in the North Eastern region has been slow.

(c) There have been a variety of reasons for this which, *inter alia*, include difficulties of geographical location and repeated natural calamities; lack of basic infrastructure in almost all the major sectors of connectivity (road, rail, air, inland waterways, telecommunication) as well as Power, Health, Education, Tourism, etc., inadequate, entrepreneurship, capacity and internal resource generation for undertaking projects; lack of sufficient employment opportunities etc.

(d) To address the problem of economic backwardness of the North East Region (NER), the Government of India have initiated various special measures. Not withstanding the fact that the North-East Region comprises only 4% of the country's population and about 8 % of its geographical area all Central Government Ministries, except for those exempted, are required to make a provision of, and spend at least 10% of their Plan budget for the North Eastern States, with a view to accelerating growth process in the Region and undoing the gap between NER and other parts of the country. The unspent balance out of this mandatory provision of 10% does not lapse and is credited to a notional pool called Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR), which is used for creating infrastructure through various socio-economic development projects in the NER. Secondly, the North Eastern States, including Sikkim, are covered under the special category States under which their Annual Plans are funded on basis of 90:10 (grant: loan) whereas for non-special category States, the funding pattern is 30:70 (grant: loan). Besides, the Border Area Development Programme (BADP), the Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) and the North Eastern Council (NEC) also fund or implement development projects in the Region.

Dumping of garbage and chemical waste in India

†471. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is becoming dumping ground for the world and every year one hundred and five (105) countries are dumping their garbage and chemical waste in india;

(b) whether environment of India is not being adversely affected due to this dumping and if so, the action taken by Government during the last three year in this regard;

(c) whether Government have prepared any project to contain the poisonous gases produced by this garbage and also their ill-effects; and

(d) the quantity of garbage produced in the country itself and out of this the extent of total garbage which is recycled?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) As per the Export and Import Policy, 2004-2009, amended from time to time and the Hazardous Wastes (Management & Handling) Rules, 1989 amended 2000 and 2003, import of garbage and chemical waste respectively for dumping are prohibited. No report of such

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi